



Testimony of Ted Doolittle
Office of the Healthcare Advocate
Before the Insurance and Real Estate Committee
Re SB 330
February 14, 2019

Good morning, Senator Lesser, Representative Scanlon, Senator Kelly, Representative Pavalock-D'Amato, and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee. For the record, I am Ted Doolittle, Healthcare Advocate for the State of Connecticut. The Office of the Healthcare Advocate ("OHA") is an independent state agency with a consumer-focused mission: assuring consumers have access to medically necessary healthcare; educating consumers about their rights and responsibilities under health plans; assisting consumers in disputes with their health insurance carriers; and informing legislators and regulators regarding problems that consumers are facing in accessing care, and proposing solutions to those problems.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment in strong support of SB 330, An Act Establishing A Human Right To Equal Enjoyment Of The Highest Attainable Standard Of Health. This bill embodies one of the most important public policy statements that this legislature will ever make in support of the common good of the citizens of Connecticut.

Until July 1, 2016, General Statutes § 38a-1051 codified the General Assembly's finding that "Equal enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is a human right and a priority of the state." This statement had been woven into the text of the legislation establishing the Commission on Health Equity. Unfortunately, Public Act 16-3, Section 208 (May Special Session) inadvertently removed this language from our statutes when, with the simple intent of disbanding the Commission, it repealed § 38a-1051 in its entirety,

HB 330 would rightly reassert the General Assembly's view that the highest attainable standard of health is a human right. Given the enormous importance of healthcare policy at the local, state and federal levels, and the far-reaching impacts that such policies have on the daily lives of every ordinary citizen, I believe that it is critical to the future of our state that the General Assembly reaffirm this commitment, and to use that foundational principle as one of the cornerstones upon which all other policies are built.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this testimony. If you have any questions concerning our position on this issue, please feel free to contact me at Ted.Doolittle@ct.gov.